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The University of Dayton

News Release

June 27, 1991

Contact: Mary Harvan

JESUIT ACTIVIST DANIEL BERRIGAN TO SPEAK AT UD ON PEACEMAKING

DAYTON, Ohio -- During the Persian Gulf War, the Rev. Daniel Berrigan, S.J., and a group of anti-war activists carried caskets through Harlem, lying down beside them in protest because "poor people were being asked to kill poor people."

Berrigan, the nationally known Jesuit peace activist imprisoned for anti-war activities in the 1960s and anti-nuclear protests in the 1980s, will speak on "The Peacemaking Citizen in the Warmaking State" at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 9, in O'Leary Auditorium in Miriam Hall on the University of Dayton campus.

Sponsored by UD's religious studies department, his talk is free and open to the public.

"We tried all the conventional means of getting authority to stop making war and preparing for war. And we got nowhere," said Berrigan, who in 1980 helped found the anti-nuclear Plowshares movement, named for the passage in Isaiah in the Old Testament in the Bible about beating swords into plowshares. "So we felt that we had to cross a line, which would endanger ourselves only but perhaps would send a more shocking message."

In September 1980, Berrigan and seven others entered a General Electric plant in King of Prussia, Pa., and hammered and poured blood on two nose cones designed to carry nuclear bombs. Their three-to-10-year sentences were overturned in March 1984.

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A New York City resident who works with AIDS patients, Berrigan spent 19 months in federal prison for pouring napalm on draft records in Catonsville, Md., in 1968. He also protested the Persian Gulf War this year. He believes Plowshares' message is reaching the White House.

"After all, Mr. (George) Bush mentioned us during his war as being objectionable people," Berrigan said in a phone interview.

He calls the Catholic church's just-war theory "ridiculous. The very idea that modern weaponry could exempt children or old people or non-combatants from being murdered... We saw it in Vietnam, we saw it in Grenada, we saw it in Panama, and now we've seen it in Iraq, that nobody is safe from this weaponry. So how can you talk about just war?"

Berrigan takes issue with the new Pershing missiles, said to be accurate enough to steer through a doorway.

"The weaponry is absolutely indiscriminate. When they can kill 500 people crouching in a shelter with one bomb, that sort of explodes that theory."

Berrigan has taught modern drama and New Testament courses at Cornell University, has protested U.S. policy in Latin America and has written volumes of poetry and prose.

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For media interviews, call **the Rev. Daniel Berrigan, S.J.**, at (212) 662-6358.